

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Action/Discussion:

The sale of surplus property at the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD)

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 167.105, KRS 45A.045, HB 380

Action/Question:

Should the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE), pursuant to applicable statutes, approve the sale of surplus property at KSD to address its current and future needs?

History/Background:

Existing Policy. In the late 1990's and up through 2002, the KBE focused extensive attention on services for students who are deaf/hard of hearing (D/HH), blind/visually impaired (B/VI) and deaf/blind throughout Kentucky. Special attention was devoted to the operation of programs at KSB and KSD. The KBE contracted with the American Institutes for Research to conduct a thorough review of all aspects of programs and services at the two residential schools and a report was released in June 2002. The report recommended that the two schools be more fully developed as statewide resources that address the needs of students who are D/HH, B/VI, and deaf/blind throughout the Commonwealth; that Kentucky examine and establish a clearer philosophy of purpose for KSB and KSD; and that Kentucky review the two schools' facilities and evaluate what facilities are needed to provide optimum services to students throughout Kentucky who have sensory loss.

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) formed sixteen stakeholder groups whose purpose was to examine existing levels of services in each region of the state, identify educational service gaps, and make recommendations that would result in optimum services for these students. All sixteen stakeholder groups issued reports to the KBE.

Staff from KDE, KSB and KSD took information and ideas from the stakeholder reports, from each school, and from other sources and developed an implementation plan based on these recommendations for changes that could take place at each school and statewide for the next five school years. This implementation plan was approved by the KBE in August 2004.

Also during 2004, committees resembling typical local school district Facility Planning Committees (FPC) were formed at KSB and KSD and regularly met to study the use of

the facilities. The committees included parents, staff from each school, KDE staff and representation from the community and interested organizations. The FPCs reviewed the facilities at each school and heard from public and private agencies interested in partnering with each school to determine how best to support the educational programs outlined in the implementation plan.

The final facility plans for KSB and KSD, approved by the KBE in December 2004, explained what buildings were necessary to support the educational programs, what buildings would need to be renovated, and what new construction would be necessary or helpful to provide the space and resources necessary to support the educational programs and services for students with sensory loss, their families and their teachers statewide. The KSB facility plan primarily called for all buildings to be substantially renovated along with the razing and construction of a new Student Activity Building, all on the existing campus in Louisville.

KSD currently is located on the east and west sides of Second Street in Danville. The KSD facility plan called for the educational campus to be consolidated and relocated to the east side of South Second Street, with the substantial renovation of five buildings (Kerr Hall, Brady Hall, Thomas Hall, Middleton Hall and the Argo-McClure Building) on the east side along with some building additions and new construction. The plan also included razing and/or surplusng several buildings on the west side of Second Street. Space would be added to Kerr Hall to house an auditorium, fine arts offerings, student dining and kitchen facilities, a student activity center and elementary school offerings, along with various related infrastructure. The facility plan at KSD also envisioned, ultimately, a campus that would be approximately 60% smaller.

Current Status of the Facility Plans:

Following KBE approval in December 2004, KDE immediately sought complete funding for both facility plans during the 2005 General Assembly. However, KDE was only allowed to substitute a previous line item funded project at KSD with phase 1 of the KSD facility plan, which is the substantial renovation of Kerr Hall with a budget of \$3,839,000.

Again, during the 2006 General Assembly KDE requested funding for the remainder of the KSB and KSD facility plans, respectively \$13,002,000 and \$11,363,000. However, funding for the KSB and KSD facility plans was not recommended in the 2006-2008 Executive Budget nor in any subsequent legislative action during the 2006 General Assembly. Consequently, except for Kerr Hall mentioned above, KSB and KSD have been able to make only limited improvements from the facilities plans through judicious use of miscellaneous maintenance funds. This will likely continue to be the case unless line item support is received from the General Assembly. Additionally, the Kerr Hall renovation at KSD, which is currently in the detailed design phase, is now being estimated substantially higher than the projections that were made when the facility plan was being developed. This is very likely a barometer forecasting higher prices for all components of both plans.

Renovation of Kerr Hall is expected to start in January 2007 and take approximately a year to complete. Based on the projected lack of funds, it becomes even more critical and necessary to surplus property at KSD in order to benefit from funding to use in making building accommodations more accessible and appropriate in meeting the instructional needs of students.

Staff Recommendation(s) and Rationales:

Staff recommends that the plan for KDE to divest KSD of surplus property be approved to provide better operating efficiency, reduced costs, better accommodation of instructional needs, increased income, reduced liabilities and improved security. This would further support the KSD Implementation Plan and Facility Plan approved by the KBE. HB 380 provides that the proceeds from surplus property sales at KSD would be used for the benefit of KSD programs and services.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

The efficient use of property and facilities at each school will support the implementation of program modifications to ensure that all available resources can be devoted to student instructional needs.

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